

Segregation in the UMD Libraries and UMD Library Education in the Early 1970's

Hello everyone. Thank you for coming to my presentation Segregation in the UMD Libraries and UMD Library Education in the Early 1970's



How and Why?

How and Why did I come to this research topic?

Last year I began to wonder what was the experience on campus when segregation ended and UMD was no longer a white only school. Where there any tensions reported in the student newspapers? What did people say?

What I ended up finding was not so much the experiences of students, but cases of discrimination and violating the civil rights act of 1964 by the Library, and students protesting over a library science programing. Following these stories in student newspapers and other research I began to understand how it ties into the larger history of library history and library education history. Through the work of Dr. Nicole Cooke, Rosemary Ruhig Du Mont, and others, I have begun to get a better understanding of race in libraries in the 20th century. In the early 20th century there was there was a complicated relationship between libraries and library education involving race. Segregation not only meant separate but equal, but meant that some libraries were just white only without a separate black library. For example, in Alexandria Virginia where a sit-in was the impetus for the creation of a library for black citizens. What black libraries there were, were largely the only libraries that hired black librarians. In the early 20th century, the Hampton Institute Library School

(which moved to Atlanta University in the 40's) was the primary educator of black librarians. In a survey of Hampton Institute graduates, 70% went to work at a black college or university library, 15% at a high school library and 12% at a public library. So, this creates something of a paradox, without limited libraries for black people, what work are you preparing black librarians for? And yet without black librarians who would be working in black libraries?

Because of the timeliness of this research I wanted to share with the community what I have found because I believe it raises important issues and places the diversity and equity concerns the libraries have been discussing since the Step Up forum into historical context. Because, from my point of view informed by this research, I believe that the issues we need to overcome have been with the UMD Libraries since for decades and I believe understanding this bit of history more can help us address these challenges. As someone who has been a student and employee at UMD since 2015, I also want to share this story because I believe it should be more widely known.



Charges of Discrimination in the Libraries

Diamondback November 12, 1971: Equal employment officer charges library discrimination"

- ▶ New policies put into place
- ▶ Candidates apply at university admin rather than at the library
- ▶ Education & experience requirements
- ▶ Policies affecting promotions
- ▶ Race and applications
- ▶ November 15th: clarifying criticisms are against university admin not library

Fred Huette, director of the library's fine arts room and Equal Education and Employment officer for the library, claimed built-in factors are discouraging blacks and members of other minorities from applying for the positions.

The earliest mention I have been able to find about discrimination at the UMD Libraries is from 1971. In an article titled Blacks 'Unwanted': Equal employment officer charges library discrimination by Rochelle Caplan, claims are made by Fred Huette the Equal Education and Employment officer at the library about new problematic policies at the university affecting the library.

Reminiscent of some discussions happening today, Huette described that for what he described as the lowest paid jobs required one year of library experience which he argued is a barrier for non-white prospective employees. He also criticized a move to centralize recruitment at the university, so prospective employees had to apply at the admin building rather at the library where students are discouraged from applying.

Huette also criticized the promotion system at the university.

Next he describes that how are coded on job applications which could lead to discrimination. Applications from a black person would have a number 2 added to the top of an application, which Huette felt could lead to discrimination whether at the library or at university admin. However, the article reports that the codes are required by the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare, but Huette maintains it

violates state law.

A few days later Huette did publish a letter in the Diamondback clarifying that any of his comments critical of administration were in reference to the university administration and not the library administration, and in his view the library was—essentially—doing the best it could do with what the university was providing it.

AFSCME In Action, Sept. 1973: "Racial Discrimination in McKeldin"

1. Out of approximately 145 classified employees in McKeldin, only 7 are black. This figure in itself is enough to indict the library administration for racism.

2. Most of the black people who do work in McKeldin are employed in the Technical Services Division. This is where the productive work of the library takes place, far away from the eye of the public. Most of these jobs are boring and the chances for promotion, especially if you are black, are slim. Even here racist hiring practices are instituted. Of the approximately 58 classified employees working in Technical Services, 4 are black.

3. Some of the supervisors are out and out racists. One such person, who has been here for over 15 years, has openly stated her refusal to work with black people. She is still on the state payroll.

4. Black professionals in the building are discriminated against also. There are only 4 blacks in the entire library system, all employed in Technical Services. Not one black librarian works on the University of Maryland staff.

However, a couple years later there is much more organized activity about discrimination on campus. This started in the Fall of 1973 with a publication of the first issue AFSCME in Action, the official newsletter of AFSCME local 1072—that is the union here on campus. The union newsletter was cofounded by Saul Schniderman, a library employee in Receiving who also served as the library shop steward. In the article titled "Racial Discrimination in McKeldin" he outlines 4 instances of racism which I've included here. Because of time I can't read through them now, but in general the points outline an underrepresentation of black people within the libraries especially in public facing and higher-level positions. He also asserts that there are openly racist individuals working in the library without any consequence.

Diamondback (Jan. 30, 1974) and Black Explosion (Jan 31, 1974)

Black groups fight job discrimination

Cite 'racist' employment standards at McKeldin



Library charged with discrimination

Sol Snyderman, shop steward at McKeldin, said "there exists in the minds of the administration a racist ideology on how to disperse information in the library, whereby that profession is reserved for white people. This ideology accounts for the absence of Black staff members in the reading rooms, where most information is distributed."

The newsletter got attention of the Diamondback and the Black Explosion which cross published an article by Susan Foster about the allegations of racism. On the left you can see the headline for the article published first in the Diamondback on January 30th, 1974 and the headline for the article published a day later in the Black Explosion. In the Diamondback, the article is published with the image of graffiti which I've included here. The caption, which you're unlikely to be able to read clarifies that that this is in reference to Harold Rovelstad, the Library Director. Unlike with the criticisms of Fred Huette, the allegations in this article also point fingers are library administration and leadership.

As reported in the articles, the movement has grown since Schniderman published his complaint in AFSCME in Action. Now The Black Faculty and Staff (BFS) and the Black Student Union (BSU) are involved with AFSCME. Meldon Hollis, chair of the BFS, describes his organizations involvement over concerns of how few people of colored are hired and the article Alan Gregory, president of the BSU, described concerns of how discrimination of black staff may mean there is also discrimination against black student employees. The article also expands on the original issues raised by the AFSCME newsletter, by pointing out that there are no professional librarians of color and that no black staff members serve in reading rooms or in other

publically, visible capacities.

McKeldin suit continues (Black Explosion, Sept. 19, 1974)

McKeldin suit continues

by Kathy Anderson
Black Explosion Staff Writer

Black Faculty, students and classified workers of the University of Maryland are continuing investigation of a 1973 discrimination suit against McKeldin Library.

The suit charges that McKeldin violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Members of the Black Community are seeking redress from ongoing discrimination in the areas of hiring, testing, placement after employment, promotion procedures, leave policies and personal treatment.

The suit was initiated after observations were made of an increase in the minority population and a disproportionate representation of this population within the University's facilities. Many employees have had difficulty being promoted and in turn receive menial jobs.

The suit was filed by coalition organizers Gladys Jefferson-AFSCME president, Alan Gregory-former Black

Student Union president, and Meldon Hollis-former Black Faculty and Staff chairman.

"The libraries are the most-institutionalized and discriminatory facilities on campus. We have a good case with a lot of facts to support it," said Gregory. He further explained that the main function the suit serves is that of showing solidarity between Black faculty, students and classified workers.

EEOC representative James Braden, who was responsible for contacting the coalition to provide further information of the suit, has to this date failed to do so, according to Gregory.

In regard to any change between McKeldin's hiring practices since the filing action, Saul Scheiderman, a worker in McKeldin said "there has been mostly superficial changes. Although Meldon Hollis is no longer with this University, Gregory and Jefferson continue an active role in organizing and keeping interest in the suit.

The next update I've been able to find was published in September of 1974 in the Black Explosion. The article describes a formal complaint made by AFSCME, the BFS, and the BSU against McKeldin Library for violating the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Most notably the article points out that the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission had failed keep the groups updated on the issue.

BFS Takes Legal Action (Black Explosion, November 20, 1974)

BFS takes legal action against McKeldin library

by Jakki Jeffers
Black Explosion Staff Writer

After a year old discrimination dispute, the Black Faculty and Staff are now undertaking legal action against McKeldin Library.

The Black Faculty and Staff, under the auspices of criminology professor Dr. Lawrence Jamison, has put together a suit proving McKeldin denies Blacks of upward mobility on the library staff.

"Blacks are placed in lower positions," said Jamison, "having little or no contact with the public in their jobs."

The McKeldin Library directors, in answer to complaints from the BFS and Black library employees, set up a review and analysis board to investigate charges. Although this task force does have a few Blacks on it, their proposals are overlooked, and thus the Black interest is not represented.

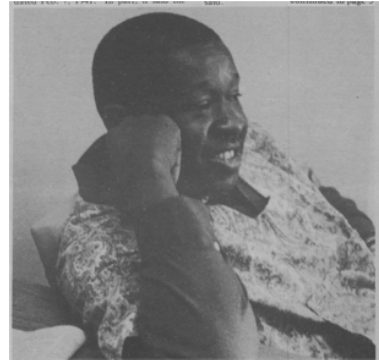
The Equal Opportunity Commission, a federal agency, has intervened four times, but the commission has made little

or no headway in their investigations. The BFS has delayed their litigation in hopes of a negotiation. Yolanda Ford, director of Human Relations, has attempted to talk to the McKeldin directors, to no avail.

Roverstad, the library director is the main aim for the negotiation. "Roverstad has had his head in the sand every since the problem surfaced," said Jamison. "with four suits already made against the library, it appears that he is totally out of touch with the problem."

In a staff meeting yesterday the BFS will make the final decision on whether or not to sue, who to sue, and the parties involved in the suit.

The trial is anticipated to be very time consuming, but the BFS hopes that at the trial's onset at least there will be a staff reorganization, or better yet some promotions of the Black staff members. "We have a sound position," says Jamison.



Lawrence Jamison is the chairman of the Black faculty and staff

The next update is in a Black Explosion article from November 1974. Based on the article, it doesn't sound like the earlier coalition is working together still. The action seems largely to be taken on by the BFS, now led by Dr. Lawrence Jamison. The article mentions that the BFS will decide on how to continue forward, but unfortunately I haven't really found out about the outcome of that meeting.

Race bias suit movement hits snag (the Diamondback, December 9, 1974)

Race bias suit movement hits snag
BFS head says complainants must initiate action

This takes us to the last article I have been able to find about this case. In a December 9th, 1974 article in the Diamondback, Henry Duvall reports that formal action by the BFS has stalled, and it is largely up to the individuals at the library to move their cases forward. The article details that complaints reported to HR are in the process of resolution, and that upper library administration including the Equal Education and Employment Officer hadn't even been made aware about the cases. The article does cite, Elsi Mauro, an "administrative assistant in charge of personnel," who details an increase in diverse hiring, "according to Mauro, 14 black, 10 whites and two other minority persons have been appointed to public service positions since July."

And this is what I have been able to find about this case.



The Urban Information Specialist Program (UISP)

THE URBAN INFORMATION SPECIALIST
PROGRAM: FIRST YEAR

- ▶ Radical program designed to address the information needs of black community
- ▶ Created by Mary Lee Bundy and ultimately directed by James Welbourne
- ▶ Waived admission requirements such as a Bachelor's
- ▶ Program ended largely due to lack of support from the library school

A Report Prepared
for
The Library Profession

Presented
by
James Welbourne
Director

The Urban Information Specialist Program was created by Mary Lee Bundy as a radical approach to address the needs of urban and under-served communities. In her 2018 article "Urban Information Specialists and Interpreters: An Emerging Radical Vision of Reference for the People, 1967 – 1973, Haruko Yamauchi described the program as "The Urban Information Specialist Program (UISP) explicitly declared that the librarian in the role of "information interpreter" should strive not to be a neutral facilitator of access to services, but rather a conscious advocate whose "stance with agencies obliged to provide information is an aggressive one." The information interpreter should seek to increase community knowledge and skills, because a "community's prospects for control over its own life situation is heightened or reduced by the extent to which it has information need-ed to make judgments and then to act on them."62 As librarians were to be active interpreters of information, patrons were also expected to be decision makers capable of using their own discernment. For instance, a course on the media offered not only an analysis of media bias, but strategies for community residents to get media outlets to fairly represent their point of view. Welbourne and Bundy were staunch critics of institutionalized racism within education, and expressed frustration that Black students were under pressure by skeptical White educators to prove their academic qualifications, that Black students found themselves in an educational system that

“rules out the values, interests, and needs of [their] people.”⁶⁵ The UISP explicitly sought to recruit more Black students, increased financial aid, and waived the requirement of a bachelor’s degree for admission. Eleven of the seventeen students accepted to the UISP were Black and six White, resulting in the admission of more Black students than any library school other than Atlanta University”. (37)

faculty forum // Death of Urban Information

Because of the continual and public controversy which has surrounded the Urban Information Specialist program, and because of attempts on the part of school and University officials to discredit and reflect negatively upon program participants, I am making this formal statement of position regarding why this program is not being continued at this university, and every major person connected with has been or is being driven off this campus.

The Urban Information Specialist program failed to win support for a second year because it refused to compromise on key issues essential to the success of the educational and social endeavor in which it was engaged. Because it sought institutional concessions necessary to program success, because it openly and directly confronted the issue of racism, because it made demands on institutional resources of more than a token nature, and because in order to survive even its first year it called upon outside political support from black

constituencies, the program engendered a measure of hostility from white interest which was to spell out its end.

The racist beliefs and policy imbedded in this school like other traditional institutions forced the program again and again to challenge University and school policy and authority. Even though under considerable pressure to do so, the urban program refused to allow itself or its students to be considered "remedial." It demanded that its students without full undergraduate preparation receive the masters degree if they earned it.

The program not only refused to accept the racist label of "remedial"; it claimed to be more demanding and more rigorous than the library school's regular program and to be in the forefront of professional development. Thus it is most certainly an affront to white racist belief in black inferiority and a threat to the school's faculty generally for its members could claim no such aspirations or standards for the regular program.

When support from the U.S. Office of


Education was obviously not forthcoming (although no valid reason for not receiving it has yet been given) I sought institution support sufficient to continue the program and to add three black faculty members to the school's faculty. These moves were more than sufficient to arouse the final administrative opposition which caused the abrupt end of the program. Even at a time when this University was claiming it could not find or attract qualified black faculty.

A program which qualified and deserved to live had to die in order to remind blacks to stay in their place. Its leadership had to be discredited if possible to avoid an open confrontation on these central issues. A state university and a federal agency elected to eliminate a program because its members refused to act out traditional token and inferior roles required of black programs at white universities.

To keep its present resource priorities intact, and to avoid a shift in the racial balance of the faculty, the school and the

university finally ended this program. The many black students, graduate and undergraduate, who had counted on or made plans to enter the program were turned away. The program faculty's offer to teach for \$1 a year was not even answered (although the University maintains it was the program's high cost which ended it). The dean of the library school, Margret Chisholm, removed Mary Lee Bundy (a full professor with tenure), the only other full-time teaching member of the program, by placing her on sabbatical for the current year, and began inquiries in how to bring about my dismissal from this University.

I have called what has happened in the past few days "racist" because it involves the weight of white institutional power crushing a black program; if it happened to whites, it would be called "fascist"; in either case it has no place in an academic community, where intellectual freedom should be a right of all individuals, rather than a privilege accorded to a chosen few.



James Welbourne
WELBOURNE

Diamondback, October 11, 1971

The end of UISP was controversial. As Yamauchi notes, however, it was also very personal. Yamauchi describes the back and forth between the UISP proponents and opponents as "Hefty files of memos and letters from all parties are thick with blame in all direction"

Response to cancellation of program (Black Explosion March, 1971)

Blacks Protest Racist Treachery

"End Racism" was the battle cry of enraged brothers and sisters as they marched to the library on March 1, 1971 for their rally in support of the Urban Information Specialist Program.

This was the 2nd rally by the BSU in support of the Urban Information Specialist Program. The BSU was asking the Library Science Dept. to give their approval of the program as designated by the BSU under the leadership of Jim Welbourne. Because the committee seemed to be negative about the program, the BSU decided to reaffirm their position.

A whole handbook could probably be written on the whys and why nots of Black students struggle on college campuses. It would mainly consist of the tricks that the administration tries to play and how to combat them. The administration could easily shift the blame to the department and say that they let the department make their own decisions.

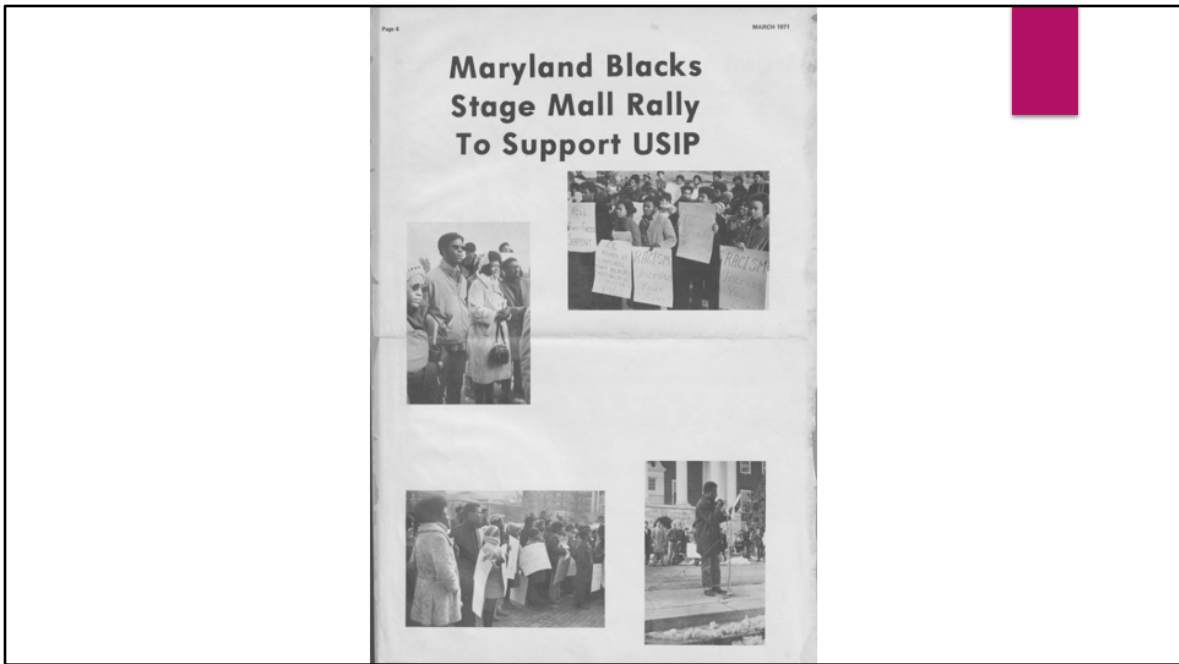
In the rally on March 1, 1971, Callcott, one of the administration's flunkies, remarked that for us to ask for support for the Urban Information Specialist Program wasn't fair.


The whole treatment of Blacks on this campus isn't fair, but anytime Black People move in a positive direction we are labeled inverse racists or some other ridiculous term that whitey can dream up.



Welbourne informs Blacks of latest USP developments.

However, what is of particular interest for me is how the students responded. Yamauchi in her article focuses on the academic politics surrounding the program. However more than just Welbourne, Bundy, and the School of Library and Information Science, the students at UMD were also involved protesting for the continuation of the program.





Next steps

- ▶ Further research in student newspapers
- ▶ Archival research to better understand the fallout of the UISP, student protests, and the charges of racism against the library

Summary

- ▶ UMD as a HWCU (historically white college and university)
- ▶ The difficulty of hiring and retaining black personnel at this library goes back to the end of segregation on campus and is tied to the larger issues affecting the education of black librarians for over a century
- ▶ The divide between a largely white, professional, librarian and more diverse staff has a history at this library
- ▶ Difficulties with promotion and moving upward, especially for staff of color, is an issue at this library since the end of segregation
- ▶ There is a history on this campus of hostility towards attempts to diversify librarianship and remove barriers to becoming a librarian.